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ABSTRACT

Current Swedish cultural policy was laid down in 1974. It was decided that one of the aims of that policy must be to ensure that earlier periods of history would be preserved and brought to life. The Government Bill (Prop. 1987/88:104) on protection of the cultural environment is concerned with helping the general public understand that cultural qualities inherent in the urban and man-made rural environment need to be preserved. The aims of cultural environment protection are to: (1) preserve and invigorate the cultural heritage; (2) achieve continuity and harmony in contemporary development of the external environment; (3) promote local cultural identity; (4) counteract threats to the cultural environment; and (5) increase awareness of aesthetic values and historical contexts. Priority is given to the following: (1) measures to counter the impact of air pollution and acidification on cultural assets, (2) care of man-made landscape, archaeological remains and buildings, and (3) popular education, citizen involvement, and synthesis of existing knowledge. Cooperation between cultural environment protection authorities and museums needs to be developed, at both central and regional levels. The museums should be capable of taking responsibility for knowledge banks, expertise, and services. The Cultural Heritage Act provides statutory safeguards for archaeological remains, historic buildings, the ecclesiastical heritage, and artifact exportation regulations. (PPB)

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Swedish Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs

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NEW SWEDISH CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

SO 020 054

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Mailing Address:
S-103 33 STOCKHOLM
Sweden
Street:
Myntorget 1
Telephone:
+46 8 763 10 00
Telex:
132 84 MINEDUC S
Telefax:
+46 8 723 11 92

New Swedish cultural environment protection

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1. Background - Governmental and legislative priorities

Protection and care of the cultural heritage in our built-up and cultivated environment is a prime national concern. The cultural heritage consists of what previous generations have created. Every age forms its own view of the importance of cultural work and concerning which parts of the cultural heritage are outstandingly valuable. Attitudes to the cultural heritage therefore vary from one age to another. They are influenced by such circumstances as the pace and direction of economic development, ideological and social debate, the content of education and research findings.

Guidelines for Swedish cultural policy today were laid down in 1974, when it was decided that one of the aims of cultural policy must be to ensure that earlier periods of history would be preserved and brought to life.

At that time, heritage conservation in Sweden was still very much dominated by traditional antiquarian activities. The focus of attention was on preservation of important buildings, churches and archaeological remains. At the same time, heritage conservation was on the point of developing into an integral part of general physical planning with reference to the use of land and settlement.

This development was governed by experience of the extensive urban development of the 1960s. During that decade the Swedish

people saw towns and landscapes being transformed to an extent and at a speed which perhaps had no previous counterpart. Those changes - and they were a mixed blessing - generated insistence on greater consideration for the existing historic qualities of the environment.

Environment protection issues, in the broad sense, have attracted growing interest since the mid-1970s. That interest has also come to focus on the cultural values of the urban and man-made rural environment. At the same time, in 1987, new planning and building legislation came into force in Sweden which, in essential respects, has the effect of transferring responsibility for decisions affecting the external environment from the State to municipal (local) authorities.

The Government Bill (Prop. 1987/88:104) on protection of the cultural environment is basically concerned with facilitating greater understanding on the part of the general public for the common task of preserving the cultural qualities always inherent in the urban and man-made rural environment, as an asset to the people who live and work there. In view of this task, cultural environment protection as practised hitherto can no longer be limited to preservation of what is specifically valuable, unique or ancient.

2. The concept of cultural environment protection

The aims of cultural environment protection are as follows:

- Cultural environment protection must preserve and invigorate the cultural heritage

  Concern for valuable ingredients of the national heritage, e.g. historic buildings and archaeological remains, continues to be of the essence of cultural environment policy. But cultural environment protection must also help to preserve and develop an abundant everyday environment.

- Cultural environment protection must be aimed at achieving continuity in the development of the external environment

  The cultural heritage should be used as a foundation for the creation and modification of human settlement, so that the contribution made by our own age to the external environment can operate in harmony with what has been created by previous generations.

- Cultural environment protection must promote local cultural identity

  One aim is to preserve distinctive building traditions and visible reminders of local history.

- Cultural environment protection must counteract threats to the cultural environment

  One of the main tasks of cultural environment protection is to give advance warning of threats to the cultural environment, e.g. in connection with industrial start-ups or the enlargement of traffic facilities.

- Cultural environment protection must help to increase awareness of aesthetic values and historical contexts

  Cultural environment protection authorities should help to re-invigorate the cultural heritage and to augment knowledge concerning the values of the built-up and cultivated environment. This calls for local involvement, with popular education, local history associations and local environmental groups necessarily playing an important part.

3. Priority fields

In the Government's belief, intensified efforts are needed above all in four fields in order to bring about a cultural environment in keeping with the guidelines presented. Those priority fields are as follows:

(a) Measures to counter the impact of air pollution and acidification on cultural assets

Air pollution is causing extensive degradation of stone, metals etc., resulting in the destruction of building façades and carved detailing, and the disintegration of archaeological remains such as rune-stones and rock carvings. Damage has now assumed such proportions that swift action is needed to curb the process. An action programme is to be implemented comprising inventories and documentation, protection and conservation measures, and research and development.

This programme has been allotted MSEK 30 for a three-year period.

(b) Care of man-made landscapes, archaeological remains and buildings

The man-made landscape of today is the sum total of the different ways in which land has been used in the course of several centuries. Accordingly, the man-made landscape is an important part of the living Swedish heritage. The survival of the man-made landscape hinges above all on the development of agriculture, just as its cultural, natural and aesthetic values are necessary to those who now farm the land. The main work of landscape conservation, therefore, is achieved by the individual farmer availing himself of opportunities to conserve the various values of the landscape within the framework of rational land use. In addition, however, specific inputs of heritage and nature conservation are needed. Where cultural environment

protection is concerned, special resources for inputs of this kind are virtually lacking. MSEK 10 is now being allocated for this purpose. There will also be some reinforcement of national government resources for conservation of the architectural heritage.

(c) Information and synthesis

Environmental valuation calls for knowledge, and there is a great need for popular education in this field. At local level it is the task of the municipality to assert the interests of cultural environment protection. The involvement of the individual citizen is one of the foundations of that protection. Study circles and local history associations are genuine manifestations of that involvement. MSEK 2 is being allocated to the Central Board of National Antiquities to reinforce inputs relating to information and the synthesis of knowledge concerning cultural environment protection.

Tasks of national museums

The traditional task of the museum has been to preserve our cultural heritage and record it for posterity. The national museums, therefore, have an extensive fund of knowledge from which cultural environment protection can benefit.

The widening of the cultural environment concept makes it essential for the content of museum information banks to be reviewed as well. Co-operation between cultural environment protection authorities and museums needs to be developed, at both central and regional levels. The museums should be capable of taking responsibility for good knowledge banks, expertise and services. The Central Board of National Antiquities and the museums have therefore been instructed to develop their mutual co-operation.

The Cultural Heritage Act comes into force on 1st January 1989.

Until now, statutory provisions on the cultural heritage have been divided between several different enactments. To codify the different provisions and to make them more readily accessible to the general public and policy-makers, the main provisions have been assembled in a special Cultural Heritage Act. At the same time, these provisions have been modernised and supplemented in several respects.

Statutory powers for cultural environment protection in the new, broader sense, however, are still based primarily on the provisions of the Swedish Planning and Building Act, the special Conservation of Natural Resources Act - which includes protection of the cultural heritage - and special enactments relating to individual sectors such as agriculture and forestry.

The preamble of the Cultural Heritage Act, however, makes it clear how responsibility for protection of the cultural environment is to be divided within the community:

Chap. 1, Section 1

Care and protection of our cultural environment is a national concern. Responsibility in this connection is shared by everybody. Both individual persons and national authorities must show consideration and care for the cultural environment. Anybody planning or carrying out work must make sure that damage to the cultural environment is avoided or limited as far as possible.

The rest of the Act is divided into four chapters - archaeological remains, historic buildings, the ecclesiastical heritage and measures to prevent the exportation of certain antiquities.

The structure of the statutory safeguards in a number of vital respects can be summarised as follows:

(a) Safeguards for archaeological remains

Safeguards for archaeological remains refer both to permanent remains and to finds. These terms are defined in the introduction of the second chapter. Permanent archaeological remains may not be disturbed, removed, excavated, covered over or otherwise altered or damaged without special permission from the regional State authority - the State county administration. The State county administration can grant permission for interference with archaeological remains, but only if their preservation would entail an impediment or inconvenience out of all reasonable proportion to their significance.

Permission is usually granted on special terms, the stipulation normally being that the person wishing to undertake the interference must finance an archaeological examination of the archaeological remains first.

Archaeological finds are objects which do not have an owner when found and which are discovered in connection with permanent archaeological remains or are presumably at least one hundred years old. Archaeological finds of the former category accrue to the State. Regarding those of the second category, it is the duty of the finder to give the State an opportunity of purchasing the find. This applies, for example, if the find includes objects of gold, silver or copper.

(b) Historic buildings

Buildings of outstanding historic interest can be scheduled by the State county administration as historic buildings. So too can buildings forming part of an environment of outstanding interest, even if there is nothing remarkable about the

individual buildings in themselves. Parks, gardens or other grounds can also be declared historic buildings.

For each historic building the State county administration issues special protective regulations concerning the care and maintenance of the building and respects in which it is to be kept unchanged. Those regulations may also include an area surrounding the building. In special cases the State county administration may sanction alterations to the historic building contrary to the regulations.

The Act is based on the principle of historic buildings being scheduled primarily with the consent of the owner. If the owner objects to this measure being taken or if the protective regulations involve extensive interference with his enjoyment of the property, he is entitled to financial compensation under special rules.

The provisions of the Cultural Heritage Act concerning historic buildings correspond to similar rules laid down in the Planning and Building Act, which empowers the municipality to issue a protection order for buildings on similar lines to those for a historic building. National protected status is reserved for the settlement of most outstanding interest, while municipal protective rules can be applied to a wider selection of buildings.

(c) The ecclesiastical heritage

The ecclesiastical heritage comprises church buildings, the land which they occupy, furnishings and other property in churches and burial grounds.

All churches built before 1939 come under a special protective arrangement which makes all essential changes subject to permission from the Central Board of National Antiquities. Churches of more recent date can also be similarly protected, by special order of the Central Board.

Church furnishings and other property of historic interest also come under the supervision of the Central Board of National Antiquities. Historical supervision of burial grounds is exercised by the State county administrations.

(d) Export restrictions

Provisions on the subject of exports are based on relatively recent legislation - passed in 1985 - which has now been incorporated more or less intact in the Cultural Heritage Act. Under those provisions, specified categories of artefacts may not be exported without permission (from the Central Board of National Antiquities or from some other national authority, depending on the type of artefact involved). Permission will not be granted if the object in question is a vital part of the national heritage.

For further information please contact Marie-Louise Hallström, Secretariat for International Affairs, Ministry of Education, S-103 33 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: +46 8 763 10 00, Telefax + 46 8 723 11 92.